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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

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Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/65/150.



I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 64/68, commended the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity; encouraged them to strengthen such efforts through, *inter alia*, a lasting multilateral and action-oriented cooperative dialogue among States of the region; and recognized the role of the United Nations in promoting regional and international peace and security.

2. The General Assembly recognized that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in levels of development and other obstacles as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area would contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through the existing forums.

3. The General Assembly called upon all States of the Mediterranean region that had not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region. The Assembly encouraged all States of the region to favour the necessary conditions for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, *inter alia*, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

4. The General Assembly also encouraged the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating international crime and illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation and which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society.

5. Furthermore, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

6. In this connection, a note verbale dated 17 March 2010 was sent to all Member States requesting their views on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Additional replies will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Morocco

[Original: French]

[25 June 2010]

Steps taken by Morocco to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

1. Importance of security in the Mediterranean region for international peace and security

Morocco reaffirms that it is committed to the objectives of peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean region and reiterates its call to all States of the region to help achieve these strategic objectives and to promote political, security, economic and cultural cooperation as a vehicle for peace and stability in this region of the globe.

Owing to its economic disparities, its cultural differences and its political and military dissimilarities, the Mediterranean is not a homogeneous area. Nevertheless, the overlap between problems of an economic, social, environmental and human nature requires that security be established in and around the region through the kind of multisectoral cooperation that can once again make the Mediterranean the zone of peaceful exchange that it was originally intended to be.

The thinking and political action needed to build an area of common security linking Europe to the Mediterranean region, taking into account all the factors that contribute to insecurity in the region, requires an overall approach to security that is multidimensional in nature and involves concerted action.

Morocco distinguishes itself in the Euro-Mediterranean context by its ambitious openness with respect to Europe, characterized by the strengthening of mechanisms for dialogue and the effective commitment of all Moroccan actors to this partnership.

The reforms carried out by Morocco at the social, territorial and human development levels and in terms of freedom of expression are in perfect accord with the approach advocated by the European Union, which places the human factor at the centre of national policies in social, economic, cultural and environmental matters.

The crowning achievement in Morocco's important relationship with Europe was the signature in 2008 of the advanced status document and the initiation of a multidimensional and promising partnership with the Council of Europe and its bodies. Morocco is thus building on the reforms led by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, with a view to promoting democratic openness, the strengthening of good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights, while maintaining a frank, multiform and responsible dialogue with its partners.

The robust and singular relationship between Morocco and the European Union was enhanced by the convening in March 2010 of the first summit meeting between the two parties. This summit, the first of its kind between the European

Union and an Arab, Muslim country, is unquestionably a qualitative step forward in the construction of a special partnership between Morocco and the European Union.

On 15 and 16 May 2010, in Tunis, Morocco took part in the proceedings of the eighth meeting of ministers for foreign affairs of the Western Mediterranean (5+5 Dialogue). The 10 countries members of the Dialogue examined the prospects for future relations between the European Union and its southern neighbours, the Union for the Mediterranean, recent developments in the Middle East situation and the prospects for resuming the peace process, and the repercussions of the international economic crisis.

Morocco reiterates that any security policy in the Euro-Mediterranean region must be based on a multidimensional approach. It cannot be restricted to a narrow vision of security but must rather involve a series of political, economic and social actions that promote human development. Morocco thus reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with all the Mediterranean partnership initiatives, including the Mediterranean Dialogue of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Union for the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean partnership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the 5+5 Dialogue.

Morocco also reaffirms its undertaking to strengthen cooperative ties and dialogue with NATO in a spirit of mutual respect and common strategic interest.

The Mediterranean approach taken by NATO contributes to the strengthening of the Mediterranean Dialogue by its practical and specific dimension. Accordingly, Morocco advocates a number of practical ways of improving North-South cooperation, especially with respect to disaster relief assistance and maritime cooperation in military and civilian matters.

Morocco is of the view that security and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean area remain interrelated with a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It has consistently called for a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arab world, to be achieved through serious negotiations leading to a settlement based on the principle of two States living side by side in peace and security.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, works tirelessly for just such a settlement, condemning the actions of the Government of Israel, which continues to defy the international community by pursuing its unbridled settlement and Judaization policy in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Morocco also calls for a joint and proactive approach with respect to the security aspects of interaction between the Mediterranean region and neighbouring African countries at the level of the Sahelo-Saharan region and the Atlantic coast.

2. Efforts of Morocco to make the Mediterranean a region of intercultural and interreligious dialogue

Given the special importance which His Majesty King Mohammed VI attaches to interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a vehicle for peace, security and peaceful coexistence among peoples and nations, Morocco actively supports the many international and regional initiatives to promote dialogue among cultures and religions, inter alia the Alliance of Civilizations.

The fact that Morocco participated actively in the three Alliance of Civilizations Forums and in the ministerial meetings held during sessions of the United Nations General Assembly testifies to its support for the Alliance and the Alliance's objectives and to its resolve to play a substantial role in this process.

As a member of the Group of Friends of the Alliance, Morocco looks forward to joining the efforts to give this United Nations initiative a regional dimension in the Mediterranean, thereby providing it with a regional presence in a common geographical and historical space. This will maximize its impact, lay the groundwork for specific projects in the areas of education, culture, science and communications and provide a base for human development and world peace.

Morocco firmly believes that interreligious cooperation and dialogue are potential means of ending violence, hatred and sectarianism, and that all States Members of the United Nations, the international and regional organizations and the non-governmental organizations should reaffirm their pledges to improve tolerance, understanding and cooperation among peoples of different religions in order to promote peace and sustainable development.

3. Continued commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation

Morocco, aware of its responsibilities as an active participant on the international political scene, is committed to promoting non-proliferation and disarmament by acceding to arms limitation and disarmament agreements, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and two of its principal Protocols, and the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (The Hague Code of Conduct), and by conforming to international and regional non-proliferation regimes.

Having signed and ratified the corpus of multilateral instruments on weapons of mass destruction, including the NPT, Morocco remains committed to nuclear disarmament that is irreversible, transparent and verifiable, and emphasizes the importance of certain key aspects, including the relationship between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Morocco's efforts and its undertaking to promote non-proliferation and disarmament have led the international community to assign many responsibilities to it in this field, namely, its election to the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors (2006-2008); its chairmanship of meetings on The Hague Code of Conduct (2006-2007); its chairmanship of the Sixth Committee (Legal) of the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, when it played a constructive consensus-building role in the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; its vice-chairmanship of the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) in 2005, when it worked towards the adoption of an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace light weapons; and its presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 1990 and 2004.

Morocco chaired the meetings on The Hague Code of Conduct from 2006 to 2007. It focused its efforts on the preservation, strengthening and universalization of

the Code, which is the only multilateral instrument on the non-proliferation of missiles to be globally applicable.

Morocco attaches importance to the central role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through its system of safeguards, particularly comprehensive safeguards. In this regard, Morocco emphasizes the necessity of universal support for IAEA safeguards and is working to preserve the credibility of the Agency by defending a position that would provide the Agency with the necessary resources for it to achieve its objectives.

Morocco was one of the first countries to commit itself to a complete and irreversible ban on nuclear tests through a universal and effectively verifiable treaty and spares no effort to secure the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which it signed on 24 September 1996 and ratified on 17 April 2000. On 24 and 25 September 2009 in New York, Morocco co-chaired with France the sixth Conference convened pursuant to article XIV of the Treaty to promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the context of its efforts in this area, Morocco has approached a number of African countries with a view to facilitating the Treaty's entry into force and paving the way for the implementation of a universal verification regime. In so doing, it highlighted the benefits to be derived by States parties from technical improvements to the international system of monitoring and the strengthening of the capabilities of States.

Morocco is equally committed to initiatives that are aimed at strengthening the authority of the non-proliferation regime and promoting its universality, including:

- The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, for which Morocco hosted the first meeting in October 2006 in Rabat;
- The Proliferation Security Initiative, which Morocco joined in May 2008; and
- The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, whose Statement of Principles Morocco signed on 1 October 2008.

Morocco supports all the relevant disarmament and non-proliferation resolutions resulting from multilateral negotiations or concluded under the auspices of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It submits reports and statements on a regular basis under the conventions and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) concerning non-proliferation.

Morocco was an active participant in the proceedings of the Nuclear Security Summit, held on 12 and 13 April 2010 in Washington, which dealt with the non-proliferation and “securitization” of nuclear weapons and material, and of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, convened from 3 to 28 May 2010 in New York.

It has consistently participated in the processes leading up to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Thus it welcomed the adoption of the Final Document of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly the decision to convene a regional conference in 2012 and the appointment of a special coordinator for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Not only is such a zone necessary to deter proliferation and dispel feelings of insecurity in the region, but it is also an international objective and a factor in strengthening local peace and security.

Morocco welcomed the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty in 1996 and reiterated its commitment to the achievement of a denuclearized Africa.

In Morocco's view, strengthening confidence-building measures in the Mediterranean region necessarily requires strengthening dialogue, cooperation and consultation on regional issues and active solidarity between both sides of the Mediterranean.

4. Steps taken by Morocco to combat terrorism, international crime, illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking

Morocco is situated at the crossroads of the Middle East, Africa and Europe and at the gateway of the Strait of Gibraltar. This special geostrategic position has advantages, but it also exposes Morocco to a number of security challenges, inter alia, terrorist infiltration, illegal immigration, illicit drugs and arms trafficking, and other organized crime.

Owing to the emergence of the new global threats, it is now more necessary than ever to step up efforts for a concerted and comprehensive cooperation capable of dealing adequately with these challenges.

In Morocco's view, the Sahelo-Saharan region poses a grave security risk, since the absence of border controls and the scale of illicit arms trafficking make it an ideal place for activism by terrorist networks. This is why Morocco decided to join its strategic allies in combating these phenomena and why it is receptive to constructive initiatives that focus on the sustainable development of this impoverished region and the strengthening of stability throughout the Maghreb.

Morocco has itself been the target of terrorist attacks and is convinced that the same threat looms over all the members of the international community. The danger comes both from local groups and from radical international movements that embrace the hateful Al-Qaida ideology. It has therefore devised a three-pronged approach for its action to combat terrorism: national, regional and international.

Morocco has pursued efforts at a number of levels in the Mediterranean region. It has, inter alia, expressed support for:

- The Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism, to which it subscribed on 28 November 2005 at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Barcelona;
- Implementation of the plan of action adopted in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
- The actions taken as part of the 5+5 initiative through active participation;
- Measures to combat illegal immigration;
- The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership initiated by the United States, in which Morocco is a full participant; and
- Operation Active Endeavour, launched by NATO in the Mediterranean.

While the threat of nuclear war has now receded, the risk that terrorists may obtain nuclear materials has increased. Morocco is a party to all existing conventions on weapons of mass destruction and contributes to international action to combat terrorism, especially action to prevent terrorist groups or networks from obtaining weapons of mass destruction.

Morocco voted in favour of resolution GC(53)RES/11 on nuclear security, including measures to protect against nuclear and radiological terrorism, which was adopted on 18 September 2009 at the fifty-third session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Moreover, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism was adopted by the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly under Morocco's chairmanship. The Convention was signed by Morocco on 19 April 2006, and the process of its ratification is at an advanced stage.

Morocco has cooperated closely with the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) (Counter-Terrorism Committee).

To combat the scourge of terrorism, Morocco has adopted a comprehensive counter-terrorist strategy based on a proactive, multidimensional approach which seeks to prevent and counteract the threat posed by the acquisition of nuclear material by terrorists. This strategy has three main areas of focus:

- Strengthening security and the physical protection of nuclear materials and nuclear facilities;
- Prevention of illicit trafficking; and
- Dismantling of terrorist groups and networks.

At the national level, the principal legal instrument on the subject is Counter-Terrorism Act 03-03 of 28 May 2003.

Under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, Morocco:

- Hosted a seminar on the emergency response to malicious acts involving radioactive material, from 5 to 7 February 2008 in Rabat, in implementation of the plan of activities for the Initiative;
- Organized a second seminar on the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials, from 3 to 5 June 2009; and
- Is scheduled to organize in March 2011 an international exercise dealing with the response to a malicious act involving radioactive material.

Morocco's growing involvement in counter-terrorism activities is designed also to bring about cooperation in the form of information exchange, assistance in the event of incidents, commitment not to provide safe haven for terrorists planning nuclear terrorist attacks, and the organization of seminars on related topics.

Given the complex nature of terrorism, which scoffs at borders and national identities, and the mobility of terrorists, it is essential to switch from the framework of action at the global level to a stronger and more appropriate regional approach. This subregional dimension could well be based on the experience of the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue (inter alia, the 5+5 Dialogue) and take greater account of the experience of the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, which,

having long been faced with the rise of heinous radicalism, have acquired expertise that should be tapped for this struggle.

Morocco has joined with other countries in approving the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. It calls for a strengthening of the international partnership, so that the donor countries, development agencies and disarmament organizations are able to integrate armed violence into their programmes of action.

It is worth mentioning that the departments responsible for combating crime in the countries on the south shore of the Mediterranean need updating, in terms of both the training of personnel and the acquisition of technical equipment, to enable them to face the new challenges posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime. The provision of technical assistance, including the assistance specified in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, is essential.

In conjunction with the European Union and the United States of America, Morocco is currently working on the establishment of an export-control regime for dual-use goods.

With regard to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the United Nations in 2001, Morocco has indicated its wish to see the Programme strengthened by significant efforts and a genuine political will with a view to building peace, implementing existing legal instruments and introducing new legal rules, *inter alia* to regulate the transfer and brokering of conventional weapons so as to control their circulation.

On 19 and 20 November 2008, Morocco, in conjunction with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, organized a seminar on promoting the universality of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons for the countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Furthermore, on 14 and 15 April 2009 in Rabat, it organized in cooperation with the United States Department of State, a seminar on conventional weapons and regional security, with experts from both shores of the Mediterranean present. The seminar focused on the illicit and uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons in North Africa from the conflict zones and the correlation between those weapons and terrorist organizations or illegal armed groups. The participants also explored possibilities for cooperation with a view to developing measures to counteract the proliferation of arms in the region.

Morocco has reaffirmed its determination to join with all other concerned States in combating illicit drugs and related crime and, in a spirit of shared responsibility, to mount a global, balanced and coordinated response to the threat which this scourge represents for all societies.

Within the framework of its efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in the anti-drug effort, Morocco took a number of initiatives in 2008 and 2009, including:

- Establishing a Moroccan-Spanish joint committee to combat illicit drugs;
- Becoming a member of the European Centre for Coordination and Judicial Cooperation (CECLAD-Mediterranean), located in Toulon, France. Consisting of the coastal States of the Western Mediterranean and some European Union

States, this Centre is a mechanism for mobilizing the anti-drug effort in the west part of the Mediterranean; and

- Joining as an observer the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre — Narcotics (MAOC-N), located in Lisbon. The Centre is a task force whose function is to counteract trafficking in drugs, especially cocaine, on the Atlantic seaboard. It is headed by the United States and has seven member countries: France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Morocco is of the view that the anti-drug effort in West Africa and the numerous instances in which illicit drug trafficking has affected regional and international stability require a renewed commitment on the part of all Member States. Accordingly, Morocco welcomes the initiatives taken by the Economic Community of West African States, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, to reverse the trend of this harmful trafficking, as well as the first positive results witnessed since the end of last year. These must be maintained and expanded to cover other destination countries in the larger Saharan area, which stretches from West to East Africa.

Morocco reiterates that international cooperation in combating drug trafficking must be strengthened. This requires a multilateral effort in which the international community should invest in a resolute approach to curbing the phenomenon. Morocco therefore calls for the provision of technical assistance by donors, the improvement of the prevention and treatment of drug addiction and the strengthening of cooperation with respect to detection and interdiction.

To thwart the alarming development of trafficking in arms, narcotics and human beings in the Sahelo-Saharan region, Morocco advocates that the international community step up its peacebuilding and rehabilitation efforts in the countries emerging from conflict.

Success in counteracting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, international crime, illicit arms transfers, and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking also depends on the establishment of lasting peace and the reduction of sources of tension. That is one aspect of Morocco's strategic commitment to building a united Maghreb on a sound basis, as a factor for promoting stability in the region and conducive to positive interaction with those in the immediate vicinity.